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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3733
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0265
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1564
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0123
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 002026

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR, INR/I
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/16/2016
TAGS: PINR PREL TW SL XL
SUBJECT: TAIWAN INVOLVEMENT IN ST. LUCIAN ELECTIONS
SUSPECTED, BUT NO EVIDENCE (C-AL6-01675)

REF: A. BRIDGETOWN 1961

1B. STATE 175636

Classified By: DCM Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Although many observers believe that Taiwan is supporting the opposition United Workers Party (UWP) in the December 11 St. Lucian elections, there is little evidence because of the lack of transparency in campaign finance. PM Anthony has expressed concern that Taiwan will provide funds through its Embassy in St. Kitts and Nevis, citing as evidence opposition leader Sir John Compton's visit with Taiwan's president in St. Vincent last year. A UWP figure confirmed that the purpose of Compton's meeting with Taiwan's president was to negotiate campaign assistance. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) A number of observers believe that Taiwan is supporting the opposition United Workers Party in the upcoming St. Lucian elections to be held December 11. However, there is little evidence supporting this suspicion because there are no laws for or norms of campaign finance disclosure in the Eastern Caribbean. Also, because of the small populations in Eastern Caribbean states, there is little political will to require transparency. Citizens are hesitant to inform their neighbors how much they are donating and to which parties.

13. (U) On September 28, 2005, UWP leader and former St. Lucia Prime Minister Sir John Compton met with President of Taiwan Chen Shui-Bian in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which Compton denied until St. Lucia Prime Minister Kenny Anthony provided evidence of the trip. The ruling St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) accused Compton of meeting with President Chen to request support for the upcoming elections. PM Anthony also expressed concern that the Taiwan Embassy in St. Kitts and Nevis may attempt to funnel money to the UWP campaign.

14. (C) On a November 13 telcon with PolOff, UWP Senator Michael Flood admitted that Compton negotiated with Taiwan concerning campaign contributions during his trip to St. Vincent more than a year ago, but claimed that the UWP has not received any funding from Taiwan because the government has blocked all diplomatic sources of funding. Flood did not discuss private or corporate sources of contributions from Taiwan. (Note: Although such a policy shift seems unlikely, Flood stated adamantly on September 19 that the UWP would

reverse diplomatic recognition from China back to Taiwan if victorious in the upcoming elections (ref A). However, in the November 13 telcon with PolOff, Flood backed away from these statements, suggesting that the UWP will reevaluate its relationship with the two Chinas and do what is in the best interest of St. Lucian foreign policy. End Note.)

15. (C) Peter Wickham, political scientist, pollster, and consultant to the SLP, said in a private conversation with PolOff on September 15 that Taiwan is likely contributing to the UWP and may even be contributing to both parties to maximize influence in the government. He emphasized, however, that this is just conjecture because, even as a consultant, he has not seen any details concerning campaign donations.

16. (C) COMMENT: Although Flood insisted that the UWP has not received "a single cent" from Taiwan, PolOff's conversations with the UWP senator tend to veer into requests for USG donations to the UWP campaign chest. Thus, partisans' testimony that Taiwan has not been involved is unpersuasive. Because of his role as an outside consultant to the SLP and his long-term involvement with Caribbean politics, Wickham's conjecture that Taiwan is involved with the UWP and possibly contributing to both parties is much more believable, if still unproven. In any case, the lack of accountability for campaign funds results in all statements being speculative, particularly because those who could speak authoritatively refuse to do so to protect their sources of support.

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